



PUBLISHED BY THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT
OF MENTAL HEALTH

FEBRUARY 2006
Volume 6, Issue 1

HOUSING NEWS

★ KEEPING HOUSING ISSUES IN THE FOREFRONT ★

HUD ANNOUNCES FUNDING

A month earlier than last year, HUD announced their funding for homeless programs. The announcement was made December 20th that thousands of local programs that house and serve homeless persons—from emergency shelters and transitional housing projects to permanent supportive housing programs—will receive \$1.33 billion in funding through grants.

In Missouri all the Continuums, along with the Emergency Shelter Grant Program, will receive 20.7 million dollars. Eight new housing programs were funded; unfortunately, none of those were in the rural parts of the state.



Rural Missouri had submitted five new proposals but none were funded. At this time we are unsure as to the reason. However, all renewals were funded so all the Shelter Plus Care programs and the Homeless Missourians Information System will continue. The City of St. Louis has four of the eight new programs, two of which are for those identified as experiencing chronic homelessness; one new program in St. Louis County was funded; two new projects in the Kansas City region; and one new project in Joplin. Most of these programs will provide permanent housing for those with disabilities.

CONGRATULATIONS to all these agencies for their dedicated service to people in need! 🏠

HOUSING FOR KATRINA EVACUEES

Months after hurricane Katrina, the federal government is working hard to provide housing for evacuees. The priority for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is providing temporary housing. As of December 19, 2005, the total number of temporary housing units ready for occupancy exceeds 60,000 throughout the Gulf States. The Gulf states have reported occupancy of 18,213 travel trailers and mobile homes on private, industry, group and commercial sites; 2,295 units on cruise ships; 925 FEMA-leased hotels rooms; and 2,881 units of federal housing. In September, the State of Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) cited 12,642 Katrina/Rita evacuees in Missouri.

Also in September, FEMA began a new program with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) called Katrina Disaster Housing Assistance Program (KDHP). This program will provide a rental subsidy based on 100

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percent of fair market rent in the community. Eligible families include displaced public housing residents, Section 8 voucher holder, Shelter Plus Care clients, and other HUD-assisted households.

To be eligible for housing assistance from FEMA, you must first register online or by telephone at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. Also call these numbers if you have questions about an existing application for emergency assistance.

Resources For Evacuees

- Evacuees who need help finding housing may contact FEMA's housing locator service at **1-800-762-8740** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. It is open daily from 8 am – 9 pm EST.
- For other forms of assistance, evacuees may contact FEMA's help line at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585**, or a nearby Disaster Recovery Center to learn more about alternative housing options and referral services.
- For general information about HUD programs, call **1-800-955-2232** or **TTY 1-800-877-8339**. For affected families to learn about the Katrina Disaster Housing Assistance Program, call **1-866-373-9509** or **TTY 1-800-877-8339**. 

DMH HOUSING TEAM MEMBER PAT BROWN HONORED IN KANSAS CITY

On November 18, 2005, during Homelessness Awareness Week,
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the Homeless Services Coalition of Greater Kansas City held its Annual Homelessness Awareness Luncheon and Awards. This year, the Alice Warren Award for Excellence in Community Collaboration was presented to DMH's own Pat Brown. Pat, an Affordable Housing Consultant, was recognized for his years of working with a diversity of Kansas City area homelessness service and housing agencies to develop partnerships in housing programs, facilitate housing solutions for persons experiencing homelessness, and




Pat Brown

to find creative solutions to the many obstacles that face people seeking housing and the agencies that serve them.

According to the Homeless Services Coalition, the purpose of the Warren Award is "to honor and continue the legacy of Alice Warren, as a devoted civic leader and community catalyst, by recognizing and celebrating individuals, agencies, corporations, or others who exemplify extraordinary leadership in community collaboration with regard to homeless issues." We at DMH

certainly feel that Pat richly deserved this honor.

Pat and other members of the DMH Housing team attended a luncheon and awards ceremony at the beautiful Guadalupe Center in Kansas City, and were joined by friends and partners representing many agencies in the area, including Swope Health Services, Rose Brooks Center, and Forest Avenue Shelter. Also honored that day were Anne Lesser, Director of Outreach and Community Services at Swope Health Services, who received the Stuart Whitney Award for Excellence in Community Advocacy; and Julie Wilber Parks, a staff member at Rose Brooks Center, who received the Maurice Vanderberg Award for Excellence in Service.

Congratulations to Pat and the other award winners! 

HOUSING HELP: HANDLING AND AVOIDING A HOUSING CRISIS

When faced with an eviction or unplanned move, you need time to plan and coordinate a logical move so you aren't forced into a worse situation than you are moving from. You should do anything that is legal and reasonable to delay an eviction or unplanned move. Sometimes landlords threaten eviction in hopes of changing a tenant's behavior, but usually will not take legal action to evict if the problem is resolved or action is being taken to correct the problem. So be sure and take



proactive steps to prevent being evicted. Act, don't just react!

Make sure your housing is affordable. Don't move into a place hoping you're going to be able to find a roommate or get a job to afford the rent. Get one or the other or both prior to moving into a place so you know you have the money to pay the rent on time.

Don't forget to take into account the cost of utilities as well. Very few places have utilities included in the rent but if you can find a place that does, it may be a good idea.


Most rent subsidy programs have a wait list, but if you need a rent subsidy program, don't wait to get on the Wait List; eventually you will receive a subsidy, if you qualify. Almost all subsidies are for permanent housing! Call your local housing authority or talk to your case manager if you need to know more.

Understand your lease and know what you are responsible for and what the landlord is responsible for. Call your local extension office or Community Action Agency and ask if they have a "How to be a good tenant" class you can attend. Or help get one started!

Here are the top ten reasons why tenants lose housing

1. Drug or criminal activity
2. Tenant abandons unit
3. Negative behavior of the tenant
4. Negative behavior of the tenant's guest(s)

5. Non-payment of rent
6. Damage to the unit by tenant
7. Person(s) living in the unit that are not on the lease
8. Failure to maintain utility service to the unit
9. Failure to comply with terms and condition of the rent subsidy
10. Landlord fails to maintain property to minimum standards

Remember, you too can prevent eviction! 

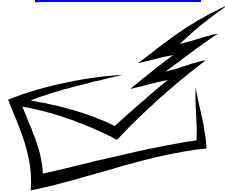
Contact Us!

The DMH Housing Team now has an easy-to-remember email address:

housing@dmh.mo.gov

You can, of course, still contact any Housing Team member individually by writing to one of the addresses listed on our website at:

www.dmh.mo.gov/ada/housing/members.htm



FAIR HOUSING ACT: PROTECTIONS FOR DISABLED RESIDENTS AND PROSPECTIVE RESIDENTS

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits housing providers from discriminating against people because of their disability or the

disability of anyone associated with them, and from treating people less favorably than others because of their disabilities.

The Fair Housing Act requires housing providers "to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, when such accommodations may be necessary to afford such person(s) equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling." It also requires that housing providers allow residents to make reasonable modifications to units and common spaces in a dwelling. Finally, it includes accessibility design and construction requirements for covered multifamily housing.

Persons with a disability are defined as individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities. Major life activities may include, but are not limited to, seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, caring for one's self, and learning, speaking or working. Covered mental and physical impairments may include, but are not limited to, blindness, hearing impairment, mobility impairment, HIV infection, asthma, mental retardation, a history of alcoholism or drug addiction, chronic fatigue, learning disability, head injury and mental illness.


The Fair Housing Act also protects persons who have a record of such impairment or are regarded as having such an impairment. Current users of



controlled substances, persons convicted of the illegal manufacture or distribution of a controlled substance, sex offenders, and juvenile offenders are not considered disabled under the Fair Housing Act because of that status. Also, if a potential resident is requesting a reasonable accommodation, a property owner can request verification of the person's need for the requested accommodation.



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is primarily charged with

enforcing the provisions of the Fair Housing Act. If you believe you have been discriminated against in the provision of housing because of a disability, contact either the Kansas City Regional HUD Office at 913-551-5644, or the St. Louis Regional HUD Office at 314-539-6583. 


MISSOURI SUMMIT ON HOMELESSNESS

The Governor's Committee to End Homelessness hosted a summit on homelessness in Jefferson City on November 7-8, 2005. Representatives of eight of the ten Continuum of Care in Missouri attended. This summit was the effort of several Continuum of Care members in Missouri to develop a state-wide strategy to end homelessness in ten years and make sure every Continuum's Plan to End Homelessness is consistent with the state-wide

strategy. The two-day summit worked on policy issues at the federal level and ways to increase the capacity of each continuum to obtain the federal dollars to address homelessness. Other areas included increasing access to services, increasing access to mainstream resources, discharge planning and HMIS implementation. The group discussed the state priority housing needs for the homeless and strategies from each Continuum of Care. This event was made possible by a HUD Technical Assistance grant for those states that have participated in the Policy Academies focused on ending homelessness. Members of the Governor's Committee to End Homelessness attended a Policy Academy in Atlanta in February 2003. It's not often that the Continuums get to work together and everyone expressed a desire that this effort continue.

Through Policy Academies, states are offered expertise and peer-to-peer learning opportunities on how to maximize the availability and accessibility of mainstream resources for homeless persons. "Mainstream resources" is a term used to describe a variety of government assistance programs for which people may be eligible because of their economic or disability status. The Policy Academy is a joint effort by U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Labor. In addition, President Bush has made ending chronic homelessness in the next decade a top objective. The Governor's Committee to End Homelessness

agrees that access to the federal resources will be necessary to end chronic homelessness in Missouri.

For more information on Policy Academies or the Interagency Council on Homelessness, visit www.ich.gov. 

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT



PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT
www.ProjectHomelessConnect.com

Project Homeless Connect was founded in October 2004 under the leadership of San Francisco's mayor Gavin Newsom. National

Project Homeless Connect Day is a chance for citizens from all walks of life to engage and help their homeless neighbors. In our continuing efforts to end homelessness, Project Homeless Connect is an opportunity to fuse political and social will to generate visible and quantifiable change on our streets and in our neighborhoods, to paraphrase Philip Mangano, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Executive Director.

On December 8, 2005, the City of St. Louis conducted its first Project Homeless Connect event. National Project Homeless Connect Day was held in over 20 other cities throughout the nation as part of a nationwide initiative to engage the community in providing comprehensive services such as



food stamps, state IDs, hygiene products, phone calls, voice mail services, medical care, veterans services, employment services, lunches, substance abuse counseling, background checks, transportation, behavioral health, legal services, mental

services offered by the Continuum of Care providers.

Department of Mental Health Housing staff have participated annually in the City sponsored Back-2-School event held each August, where homeless children



Some of the many volunteers at the St. Louis Project Homeless Connect Day, December 2005.

health, HIV testing, shelter/housing information, birth certificates, social security benefits, and family reunification. These services were coordinated in a centralized location at 12th & Park Recreation Center with the ultimate goal of housing and self-sufficiency. Over 140 consumers and 160 volunteers participated.

Project Homeless Connect builds upon other initiatives the City of St. Louis' Department of Human Services sponsors each year to connect homeless persons with supportive services and housing. For the last eight years, the City has conducted Homeward Bound, a joint venture with St. Louis County, at which area homeless residents receive information on the array of

receive immunizations, school supplies, and school enrollment information, as well as participate in a variety of educational enrichment and recreational activities.

Other Project Homeless Connect programs may be conducted in other parts of the state as their efforts prove fruitful. Read and watch your local news or, better yet, attend your local Continuum of Care meeting and promote a Project Homeless Connect Day!!

The main Web site for Project Homeless Connect is www.projecthomelessconnect.com. An article about the 2005 San Francisco Project Homeless Connect Day 2005, with numerous excellent photographs, can be found at www.sanfranciscosentinel.com/id41.htm. 

UNSHeltered HOMELESS COUNT

The Balance of State Continuum of Care is going to be doing a point-in-time count of unsheltered homeless persons again this year. The current plan is to conduct training during the Winter Regional Housing Meetings. Last year's count, which was not as extensive as we need, showed there to be an average of four unsheltered persons per county.

As we continue the planning needed to end homelessness in Missouri, it is imperative that we know not only how many people are in the shelters, but how many people are living in their cars, in camp sites, in abandoned buildings or anywhere else not designed for human occupation.

If you know people who have no home, let your local community action agency know. Or talk to them and have them go to the community action agency. Some kind of help is usually available.




UPDATE FROM CENTRAL MISSOURI COMMUNITY ACTION

The Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA) Section 8 program will begin a Home Ownership program in 2006. Home Ownership classes will begin in Callaway County on Monday, January 23rd from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. and run for four weeks (January 23 & 30 and February 6 & 13). Anyone who is interested in home ownership can attend. The classes are mandatory for



purchasing one of CMCA's homes or for Section 8 Home Ownership. For those folks living in Callaway, Cole, Cooper, Howard, Moniteau and Linn Counties who may be interested, contact Liz Hagar-Mace, the CMCA Housing Director, at 573-443-8706 ext. 290 for more information. Home Ownership Classes will begin in Howard County at the beginning of March. Watch for more info.

CMCA also has two homes for sale in Fulton. Applications are being taken at the Callaway County Office at 610 Collier Lane in Fulton, through January 20. 

Visit us on the web at:

www.dmh.mo.gov/ada/housing/housingindex.htm



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Housing News is published by the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Housing Team. It is distributed free to Missourians interested in housing issues.

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